

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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2009

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2008/2025(BUD)

4.6.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgets

on the 2009 budget: first reflections on the 2009 PDB and mandate for the conciliation
(2008/2025(BUD))

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Underlines that, in order to enable the European Union to meet its external action obligations and to play an active role in facing global challenges, sufficient funds need to be allocated in the EU budget;
2. Is disappointed by the share of appropriations envisaged for Heading 4 under the Commission's Preliminary Draft Budget (PDB) 2009 and by the fact that, while the EU's international obligations are increasing, the growth in commitment appropriations with regard to the 2008 budget is below the rate of inflation for the same period;
3. Considers the presented margin to be rather artificial and arbitrary; calls on the Commission not to use the Flexibility Instrument or the Emergency Aid Reserve for programmable long-term activities;
4. Is aware of the limits of the financial framework 2007-2013; therefore urges the Commission and the Council to take the increasing role of the EU as global player duly into account when preparing the review of the EU financial framework;
5. Points out that, since the institutional set-up concerning the High Representative, the President of the European Council and the European External Action Service is not yet determined, the necessary budgetary appropriations should be made available gradually as the scope and the role of the new organisational structures become clearer; underlines that neither the institutional changes nor the new Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) provisions should further strain the current level of commitment appropriations under Heading 4;
6. Is concerned by the appropriations envisaged for Kosovo, particularly under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), in the PDB 2009, which are lower than the funding provided for in the adopted 2008 budget; asks the Commission and the Council to inform Parliament about funding absorbed out of the 2008 budget, given the current situation on the ground and probable delays in deployment of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX); urges the Commission to re-assess on this basis the requirements in respect of Kosovo's institution-building and socio-economic development, and of the EU's contribution to the international presence there in 2009;
7. Expresses its dissatisfaction with the appropriations envisaged in the PDB 2009 for Palestine, which are nearly 50% less than those provided for in the adopted 2008 budget and more than 60% less than those provided for in the final 2007 budget; is of the view that, when programming the assistance needed, the Commission can build in this case on experience gathered and needs estimated, and should therefore be able to allocate the funding needed to contribute to the viability of the Palestinian authorities and to the Middle East peace process;

8. Supports actions and appropriations aimed at enabling the EU to act in peace processes in conflict areas, for instance Iraq;
9. Reaffirms its support for the implementation of a deepened and differentiated European Neighbourhood Policy; underlines the need to provide the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) with an adequate financial envelope reflecting the EU's commitment vis-à-vis its east European and southern neighbours; notes the modest increase in appropriations envisaged for 2009, and stresses that the recent initiative "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" must neither hinder the efforts to establish a balance between the commitment appropriations for the eastern and southern European neighbours nor in any case increase the budgetary tensions within the ENPI;
10. Welcomes the increase of appropriations envisaged for the Western Balkan countries under the institution-building component of the IPA, and in particular the Commission's intention to step up the provision of additional scholarships and to increase funding for civil society dialogue; asks the Commission to support the Social Agenda for the Balkans;
11. Believes that in the context of cooperation with developing Middle Eastern (DCI) countries, particularly as regards Iraq, the stepping-up of scholarship programmes and city twinning could have beneficial effects for mutual rapprochement;
12. Reaffirms its support for democracy and human rights as key elements of the EU's foreign policy; considers the promotion of non-violent methods to be one of the most appropriate means for supporting democracy and human rights; notes with satisfaction the increase, albeit modest, in funding for the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), including that allocated for electoral observation, and stresses that this amount provided for in the PDB 2009 should be preserved as a minimum; is concerned by the fact that European actors, such as independent political foundations, are often de facto excluded from implementation of the EIDHR at the level of Commission delegations, and demands EIDHR implementation in line with existing legislation for more effective democracy promotion;
13. Supports actions promoting strategic use of resettlement with a view to opening up humanitarian space in acute refugee situations, so as to enable the EU to demonstrate a significant and concrete solidarity at European level that can have an added value within a broader approach on the provision of humanitarian support to a given country or region;
14. Reiterates that Latin America is a priority region for the European Union, and underlines that the EU's relations with that region need to be appropriately funded in line with the results of the Lima Summit and developed with respect to human rights, democratic principles and the environment;
15. Supports – given the need to strengthen the EU's relations with Central Asia on the basis of the strategy adopted in 2007 – the frontloading of assistance to that region for 2009;
16. Welcomes the increase in funding proposed for the Instrument for Stability; emphasises, however, that the criteria for allocating funds under that instrument need to be further developed, in order to make them more transparent and to ensure that resources are

channelled in a consistent way to real priorities; reiterates that Parliament is to be involved in the development and specification of the relevant criteria; draws attention to the redundancy of the separate preparatory action on the Conflict Prevention Network, which should be abandoned and the financial means transferred to the Peace Building Partnership within the Stability Instrument;

17. Points out with concern the growing world food crisis and the effects of climate change; urges the Commission and the Council to reflect on the possible consequences for global security, and underlines the need for the EU to be able to react to this situation and related speculations, and to meet its commitments in respect of the supply of food aid and responding to disasters in developing countries;
18. Disapproves of the proposed increase in funding in respect of European Union Special Representatives (EUSRs), particularly since Parliament is yet to be involved in the process of creating new EUSR positions, setting their mandates and appointing the EUSRs; stresses that the Lisbon Treaty will enable the EU institutions to search for synergy between Commission delegations and Council EUSRs (double-hatting), thus avoiding duplication of tasks, improving coordination and increasing the effectiveness of the EU's external action;
19. Appreciates the continuation of the dialogue with the Council presidency on the CFSP priorities; is committed to reinforcing that dialogue so as to ensure timely inter-institutional coordination in shaping the course of the CFSP and to enhance its effectiveness and democratic legitimacy; underlines that the quality of the information provided needs to be improved and its continuity ensured;
20. Reaffirms its support for the activities of the working groups established by its Committee on Foreign Affairs to monitor the implementation of the external assistance instruments; looks forward to enhanced structured cooperation and consultation with the Commission on the implementation and revision of the multiannual indicative planning documents;
21. Reiterates in this context its request for the conclusion of an inter-institutional agreement between Parliament and the Council defining, on the basis of the Treaty of Lisbon, their working relations in the field of external action, including the sharing of confidential information;
22. Emphasises the political importance of pilot projects and preparatory actions adopted by the budgetary authority under Heading 4; calls for the timely and pro-active implementation thereof by the Commission, making full use of allocated commitments;
23. Notes that the Commission proposes to reinforce the Thematic Programme for the Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP); reiterates the need to build up a common external energy policy, and asks the Commission to inform Parliament about funding envisaged in the 2009 budget for the realisation of Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E) priority projects aimed at strengthening the EU's energy security.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.6.2008
Result of final vote	+: 36 -: 6 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	André Brie, Colm Burke, Philip Claeys, Véronique De Keyser, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Bronisław Geremek, Maciej Marian Giertych, Ana Maria Gomes, Alfred Gomolka, Anna Ibrisagic, Ioannis Kasoulides, Maria Eleni Koppa, Helmut Kuhne, Willy Meyer Pleite, Francisco José Millán Mon, Philippe Morillon, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, Alojz Peterle, Tobias Pflüger, João de Deus Pinheiro, Samuli Pohjamo, Libor Rouček, Christian Rovsing, Katrin Saks, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, István Szent-Iványi, Inese Vaidere, Ari Vatanen, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Luis Yañez-Barnuevo García, Zbigniew Zaleski, Josef Zieleniec
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Alexandra Dobolyi, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, James Elles, Jaromír Kohlíček, Doris Pack, Rihards Pīks, Karl von Wogau
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	